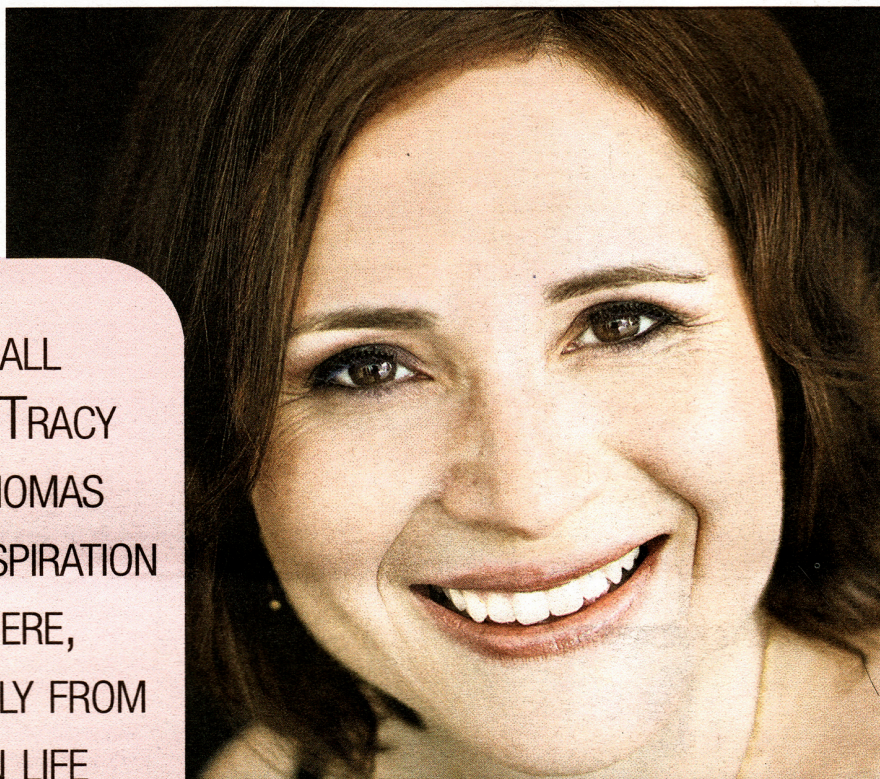


# Tales From There and Back Again

'JILL OF ALL TRADES' TRACY KASH THOMAS FINDS INSPIRATION EVERYWHERE, ESPECIALLY FROM HER OWN LIFE



Singer Tracy Kash Thomas' varied music background includes folk and jazz.

For one fretful moment in 2001, classically trained singer/composer Tracy Kash Thomas wondered if returning to Detroit was a mistake.

"I remember driving up in the moving van, thinking, 'Now what?'" Thomas says.

It had been 14 years since the Oak Park native left Michigan to study jazz vocals and classical flute at the University of North Texas. She had earned a master's degree from the esteemed Boston Conservatory, and in 1995, moved to New York City, where she performed original songs for six years.

"It's a tough scene," she says. "Doors are slammed in your face before you even knock on them."

Thomas' struggles and joys are the themes behind her second CD, *There and Back Again* (2006). *Relocation Song* reflects her angst about coming home. The jazzy *Person I Adore* is a love song to her husband, John Thomas, whom she met two months after returning to Detroit.

Her vocals are reminiscent of Carole King, but the

style is harder to categorize.

"People ask me, 'So what kind of music do you do?' I just sit there and go, 'Jazz, R&B, rock, singer/songwriter ...'"

"I don't know if that gives people a picture of what I am," she says with a laugh.

With such varied musical interests, no inspiration is beyond Thomas' grasp. When a friend adopted a child from Guatemala, Thomas composed a lullaby influenced by Guatemalan music. Then she overheard a father say, "Hold my hand, Zoey" in a store, and she had her title. The result is a wistful song of parental hopes and dreams she plans to include on her next CD.

Thomas has become a popular performer in Detroit. In addition to her own band, she plays keyboards and flute in the Celtic quartet McCabe's Ladies, which the band says is metro Detroit's only all-women Celtic group.

"I'm glad I moved back home," she says. "I was waiting to regret the decision, but I never did." ☺